



Downtown Investment Grant Application

FY 2016

Virginia Main Street

Department of Housing and Community Development

600 East Main Street, Suite 300

Richmond, VA 23219

804-371-7030

Applications accepted on CAMS starting: July 17, 2015

Last day applications accepted on CAMS: August 31, 2015

Grant awards announced: September 2015

Grant funded projects must be complete and grants closed: June 30, 2016



**VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING
AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**
Partners for Better Communities

Virginia Main Street (VMS) Downtown Investment Grant

The [Virginia Main Street Program](#) is a community economic development program that follows the Four Point Approach™ of the National Main Street Center. Each year local Main Street organizations work to attract to their historic commercial districts the substantial private and public investment necessary to: (1) breathe new life into blighted and vacant buildings, (2) establish and expand independent businesses that make downtowns fun and unique consumer destinations, and (3) create mixed-use downtowns where people once again live above bustling commercial establishments and property owners maximize the productive use of every floor of downtown buildings.

To date, VMS communities have been very successful in creating environments that encourage private investment downtown. In 2014 alone, VMS communities saw over \$29 million in privately funded improvements to downtown historic buildings, \$7 million in public improvements to help support and encourage private investment in downtowns, the start-up, expansion or retention of over 150 unique businesses in historic commercial districts, and the creation or retention of nearly 650 jobs for local community members seeking employment.

Downtown Investment Grants (DIG) will help local Main Street organizations accelerate the economic revitalization of their historic commercial districts by allowing them to implement innovative strategies, plans and programs that boost and accelerate private investment on Main Street.

Downtown Investment Grants are not capped, but grant awards will not typically exceed \$50,000. DIGs help Main Street organizations implement projects that:

1. Facilitate innovative means of encouraging private investment that result in measurable economic improvement in the Main Street district;
2. Directly support the community's vision for encouraging the private investment necessary for the economic revitalization of the Main Street district;
3. Align with the Main Street organization's mission and the board's strategic planning goals for the Main Street district; and,
4. Develop volunteer leadership, capacity and expertise in the Main Street organization.

Projects are to be completed by June 30, 2016.

The DIG funds will not be awarded for continuing operations, program administration, payroll, debts or any other operational expenses. Funds will not be awarded for predictable organizational expenses for which the board could have reasonably planned (ex. general marketing materials, website updates, financial management expenses, etc.). Funds may not be simply "passed through" the Main Street organization to 3rd parties.

Instructions for Application Submission

Please note that applications must be submitted electronically through the Agency's Centralized Application and Management System (CAMS). To access CAMS, visit the website at www.dhcd.virginia.gov and click on the CAMS icon in the upper-right hand corner.

Google Chrome is the recommended browser for CAMS. Remember to SAVE often.

Submission Requirements

All grant applications and supporting documentation must be submitted on CAMS by 11:59 PM on August 31, 2015. Applications not submitted accordingly may be disqualified.

Applicants must submit completed responses to all appropriate questions and include all required attachments.

Grant Eligibility

Grants are available only to designated VMS communities and must be administered through the designated local VMS organization. Special exceptions may be made for high functioning commercial district affiliates. Applicants must be current on all VMS reports.

All applicants must comply with DHCD's financial auditing requirements by uploading to CAMS a copy of the organization's W-9 and a copy of the organization's most recent audit, reviewed financial statement or 990, as applicable, by the grant's application deadline (August 29, 2015).

VMS Funding Priorities

For this fiscal year grant cycle, VMS is interested in investing in the following types of projects with the Downtown Investment Grant funding:

- 1) Assist with downtown property development or redevelopment within the district through community-initiated development (community group working on real estate redevelopment project versus traditional developer-lead redevelopment).
- 2) Creation of a revolving business loan or façade loan program that leverages local or private sources. Partnership with a local banking institution is desired.
- 3) Business promotion event that focuses on shopping downtown. The event should focus on "getting cash registers to ring." The proposed project should not be for an existing promotional event.
- 4) A regional marketing program that connects area Main Street communities (and any nearby community affiliates) as a way to promote visitors to shop downtown. The proposed project should be in partnership with local/regional tourism offices and in consultation with the Virginia Tourism Corporation.
- 5) A project that implements the Economic Restructuring goals as identified by the organization through programs that support new business start-ups, business expansions, downtown property development and other private investment in the community.

A strong application will clearly explain how the proposed project will encourage private investment that results in measurable economic improvement in the Main Street district. The project will support the

community's vision for encouraging the private investment necessary for the economic revitalization of the Main Street district, will clearly align with the mission of the Main Street organization and will address one or more of the Main Street board's strategic planning goals for the Main Street district. The implementation of the proposed project will empower board and committee volunteers as leaders and will help develop and capitalize on the expertise and financial support of the organization's stakeholders and community partners.

Grant Payment

Grant funds will be paid upon completion of agreed upon project milestones. Milestones will be negotiated and included in a memorandum of understanding that will be signed by both DHCD/VMS and the grantee prior to the start of the project. Projects must be completed no later than June 30, 2016.

Leverage Requirement

All projects must provide a **minimum of 1:1 leverage**. In-kind services provided by local government, consultants and other Main Street stakeholders and partners may be included. Time contributed solely to the implantation of the project by volunteers from the Main Street organization or the organization's partners may be included. Volunteer hours are calculated at \$24.49 per hour (https://www.independentsector.org/volunteer_time).

Scoring

Grant proposals will be scored on a 0-100 point scale with a 10 point bonus available to applicants. DIG funds are limited and only those proposals exceeding the minimum 70-point threshold will be considered for funding. The project scoring methodology is as follows:

Scoring Criteria	Points
Relation to organizational mission and vision	10
Relation to Economic Restructuring goals/strategies	20
Project's Impact on downtown improvement	30
Organizational capacity/readiness	20
Realistic workplan for project	10
Total	100

Application Instructions

The application on CAMS will require the organization to:

1. Provide a description of the proposed project and explain how it is an innovative strategy that will attract private investment to the Main Street district that will result in new and stronger businesses, building renovation or construction and/or increase downtown shopping.
2. Explain how this project aligns with the organization's vision, mission and strategic goals for the Main Street district as well as a list of the current board members and committee chairs.
3. Upload multiple supporting documents as attachments.

Project Description

Enter the following information into the relevant text box on CAMS. Please limit responses to no more than 500 words per text box (about one written page).

1. Provide a detailed description of the proposed project and its intended outcomes. Explain how this is an innovative strategy that will attract private investment to the Main Street district that will result in new and stronger businesses, building renovation or construction and/or increase downtown shopping.
2. Fully describe both the direct and indirect outcomes that are expected from this project.
3. Describe how the proposed project furthers the community's vision for the Main Street district, aligns with the mission of the Main Street organization and addresses one or more of the board's strategic planning goals for the Main Street district.

Required Support Documents - Organization Leadership

Enter the following information into the relevant text box on CAMS. Please limit responses to no more than 500 words per text box (about one written page).

1. Community's **Vision statement** for the Main Street district.
2. **Mission statement** for the Main Street organization.
3. Strategic Plan that lists the board's priority **goals** for the Main Street district.
4. A list of current board members and committee chairs.

Required Support Documents - Project Implementation Capacity

Upload the following documents as attachments in CAMS.

1. **Project Work Plan** – Provide an effective and appropriate work plan for the project that includes tasks, responsible individuals, timeline and budget. Please use a format similar to the one included in **Appendix A**.
2. **Mini-Resumes** - Provide “mini-resumes” that describe the project related expertise of each individual/organization listed on the work plan. No more than one paragraph of relevant information per individual/organization.
3. **Budget** – Provide the following budget information:
 - a. **Project Budget** – Provide a project budget that includes all project related line items for expenditures and all project related line items for funding sources.
 - b. **Explanation of Cost Estimates** – Provide detailed information on the source of the cost estimates and the date the estimates were received.
 - c. **Leverage Verification** – Provide verification of leverage funds including contracts, memorandums of understanding/agreements, award letters, and other documentation that confirms the commitment of other resources for the project. Include documentation and calculations for in-kind contributions and volunteer hours.

Main Street Work Plan

Related Board Goal(s): _____

Anticipated Results/Measure of Success:

Project Team Members:

<i>Tasks</i>	<i>Person Responsible</i>	<i>Start and End Date</i>	<i>Cost</i>	<i>Revenue Generated</i>	<i>Volunteer Hours Needed</i>	<i>Staff Hours Needed</i>	<i>Progress/Completion/Comments</i>
TOTAL:			\$ _____	\$ _____			